

## METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR NETWORK ASSESSMENT AND AUTHENTICATION

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Providing a user with assurance that a networked computer is secure, typically before completion of the log-in operation. This can be accomplished by extending the local log-in process to perform a host assessment of the workstation prior to requesting the user's credentials. If the assessment finds a vulnerability, the log-in process can inform the user that the machine is or may be compromised, or repair the vulnerability, prior to completion of the log-in operation. By performing vulnerability assessment at the level of the workstation, a network server is able to determine whether the workstation is a "trusted" platform from which to accept authentication requests. If the vulnerability assessment shows that the workstation is compromised, or if the possibility of remote compromise is high, the network server can elect to fail the authentication on the grounds that the workstation cannot be trusted. Optionally, a vulnerability assessment tool may be able to repair the vulnerability of the workstation, and then allow the authentication to proceed.

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